



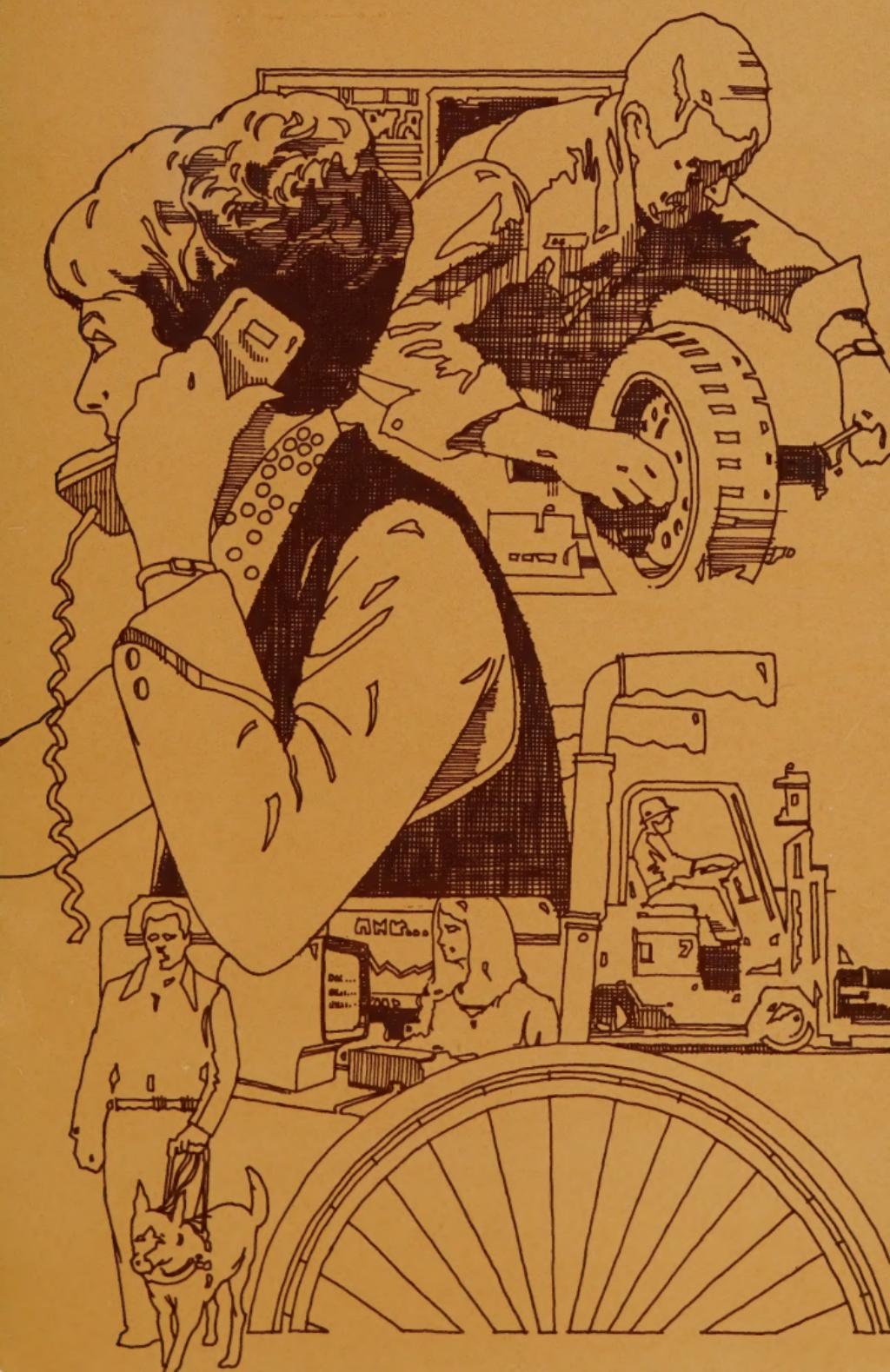
Ministry of
Community and
Social Services

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On your way to work

**Job counselling, assessment,
training and placement
for disabled people**



Introduction

If you have a disability which makes it difficult — or impossible — to find and hold a job, you may be eligible for help under the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program.

This program is free to all eligible persons with physical or mental handicaps in Ontario. The aim of the program is to help disabled persons become employable and, whenever possible, self-supporting.

Are you eligible?

The Ministry of Community and Social Services maintains a staff of counsellors and supervisors who are trained to help disabled persons. They are located throughout the province.

You will be asked to meet with a counsellor to determine if you are eligible and would benefit from the program. The counsellor will need a medical report from your doctor, verifying your condition. You may be eligible for the program whether your disability has been present from birth or resulted from illness or accident.

You are not eligible for assistance if you are entitled to, or are receiving, Vocational Rehabilitation Services from the Federal Department of Veterans' Affairs or the Ontario Workers' Compensation Board.

Why type of assistance is offered?

Eligible persons may have vocational programs set up to suit their specific needs. Community resources such as skill training centres, schools, universities, colleges and special workshops are often used. Specialists in medicine, psychology, training and business may provide advice.

People with a hearing impairment, blind persons, and persons with spinal cord injuries are often referred to agencies specializing in these disabilities. The Canadian Hearing Society, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Canadian Paraplegic Association are authorized and funded by the ministry to offer vocational rehabilitation services in some areas of the province.

Individual programs

Once eligibility has been determined, a program that suits your specific needs in relation to a vocational goal will be worked out. Services may include counselling, assessment, training, restoration and job placement.

Counselling

Counselling is one of the most important aspects of the rehabilitation process. Your counsellor will work with you to develop the most beneficial program for you, based on your needs, interests and abilities.

Your counsellor is interested in you as an individual and will listen to your ideas and views as well as make suggestions. You should discuss your hopes, ambitions or worries, as they all affect the choices possible for your future.

The counsellor will advise and guide you through each step of rehabilitation, ensuring that you receive the services you require.

Assessment

You and your counsellor will explore your individual abilities and interests in order to decide upon the most suitable vocational goal for you.

There are three main areas that must be fully assessed:

Medical Assessment

- Explores the extent of your disability and evaluates the ways in which it could affect your work capacity;

Social Assessment

- Examines your personal resources — such as support from friends or family — and social skills to determine how these may be used and developed in your vocational rehabilitation;

Vocational Assessment

- Focuses on your potential in specific areas in order to help you select the most appropriate vocation.

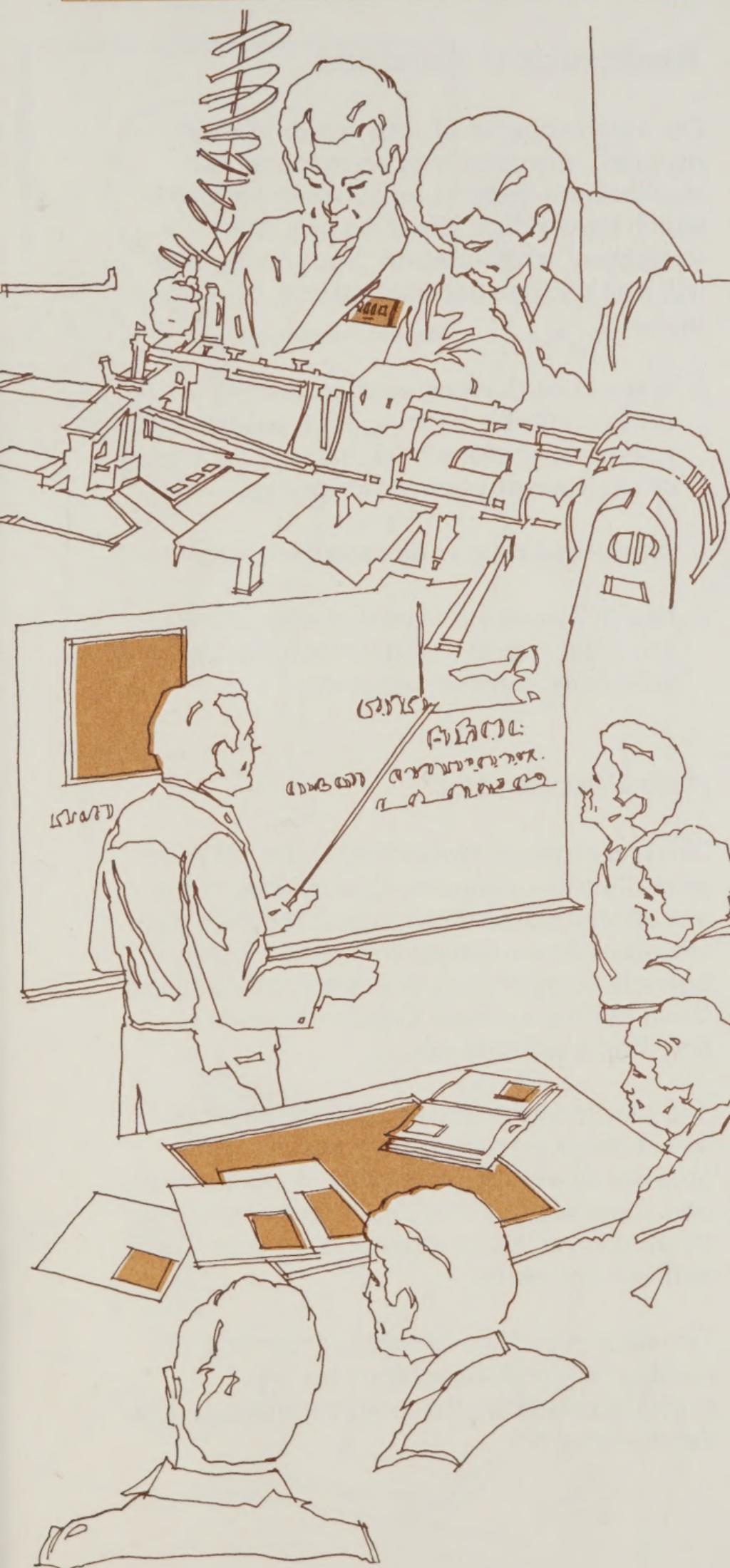
A psychological assessment may also be used to help you and your counsellor learn more about you — your aptitudes, your interests, and your ability to handle particular types of work or the need for further education in specific areas.

After assessment, your counsellor may be able to help you find suitable employment. If further help is required before you can obtain employment, additional rehabilitation services may be provided for you.

Training

If your assessment indicates that you require vocational training, a program will be set up to help you. There are several ways in which you may be helped to develop your work skills or be trained for a particular trade or career.

- Assistance may be given with education or training at a community college, business, trade school, or university, with disability-related expenses paid for by the ministry.
- Training on the job may be arranged. This provides for the ministry to share in the cost of wages during the training period.
- Help may be given in developing good overall work skills and habits as a step toward job placement. Further training or sheltered employment may be provided by rehabilitation workshops.
- Special transportation services may be provided during your rehabilitation program, should you be unable to make use of public transportation due to a disabling condition.



Restoration Services

During the course of your rehabilitation program, the need may arise for certain medical and restorative goods or services which have a direct bearing on your vocational rehabilitation. Your counsellor will assist you in obtaining these. They may include:

- restorative devices, such as braces, artificial limbs, hearing aids, automobile hand controls or wheelchairs, to restore or improve physical functioning;
- prescribed drugs and essential dental care;
- health insurance coverage which may be provided free of charge in conjunction with your rehabilitation program.

Job Placement

Job placement is the eventual goal of your rehabilitation program. Counsellors of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program maintain close contact with other social agencies, employers, personnel officers and Canada Employment Centres in order to help find a suitable job.

Job placement counsellors are trained to select employment appropriate to your abilities as well as disabilities. A counsellor can, if necessary, interpret your handicap to the employer, while emphasizing your abilities and skills.

Occasionally, basic tools or equipment are needed before you can start the job. In some instances, these are provided by the ministry.



Living Expenses

During your assessment and training, you may be eligible for a maintenance allowance to meet living expenses such as food, clothing, and accommodation.

Your eligibility for this allowance will depend on your assets and income. This allowance may also include provision for your dependants, subject to their income.

How do I Apply for Vocational Rehabilitation Services?

To apply for these services, contact the closest local office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Be sure to tell them that you are enquiring about the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program.

Referrals may also be made through doctors, hospitals, schools, clinics, volunteer and social agencies, Canada Employment Centres, various government services, family members and other concerned parties.

What if I am Refused by Vocational Rehabilitation Services?

If, at any stage of the rehabilitation process, a benefit is refused, suspended or cancelled, you will be advised in writing of the reasons for this. You then have the right to appeal this decision.

The first step in the appeal process is to discuss the matter with your counsellor. If the problem is not resolved in this manner,

your counsellor will advise you of the appeal process available to you. Your case will be reviewed at the area office level, and if you are still not satisfied, you will be advised, in writing, that you may request a further hearing by writing to:

Social Assistance Review Board
Room M1 — 56
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1E9

Other Services

Other services, such as special residences for handicapped persons, or special educational facilities are often available in the local community. Your counsellor will be familiar with these resources.

John Sweeney
Minister

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For more information contact the nearest area office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The telephone number will be found in the Ontario government section of the blue pages in the back of your directory.

